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SAMARITAN HEALTHCARE EMPLOYEES TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

Moses Lake –Samaritan Healthcare officials confirm (7) employees have tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). The affected employees do not work in in the same department, and majority of them are in non-patient care departments. Samaritan has been working closely with the Grant County Health District to conduct contact tracing as well as testing, and symptom monitoring of additional staff. Upon initial review, it appears the employees have contracted the virus through community exposure.

“Our thoughts and prayers for strength and healing are with our employees,” said Samaritan CEO, Theresa Sullivan. “COVID-19 continues to impact our community, and we want to encourage everyone to mask up and help stop the spread of this virus.”

On Wednesday, July 26, Samaritan officials began a thorough case investigation which included contact tracing of all positive employees. As of Monday, Samaritan has conducted an additional 28 tests on employees, and found no further positive test results among employees. Additionally, two tests were conducted on former patients who had direct, prolonged contact with the COVID-positive employees. However, due to the delay from regional diagnostic labs, we have not yet received those results.

In early March, Samaritan Healthcare implemented a comprehensive screening strategy on all campus locations. The screening process involves a COVID-19 symptom questionnaire and temperature check, upon entrance and exit to any Samaritan facility. Additionally, all staff, patients, and visitors are required to wear masks during the duration of their activities on campus.

“When the pandemic arrived in March, we provided additional training for all staff regarding appropriate PPE usage, which included mandatory N95 masking by all clinical staff, and the introduction of cloth or procedural masks for all other staff,” stated Dr. Andrea Carter, Chief Medical Officer. “As we continue to review our case investigations, it is evident that proper PPE use by staff helped reduce the risk to our patients and fellow staff who may have come into contact with the affected employees.”

“We remain vigilant in our commitment and efforts to ensure the safety of our staff and patients,” stated Sullivan. “We are grateful for our dedicated staff who continue to work hard each day to care for our patients and the community.”

Over the coming weeks, Samaritan officials will continue to work closely with the Grant County Health District to monitor and follow up on all employees and patients identified through the contact tracing process.

“Samaritan Healthcare’s strong COVID-19 infection control policies have demonstrated the importance of taking COVID-19 precautions to slow the spread of the illness. Their quick work to identify close contacts, test, and maintaining their daily COVID-19 prevention policies resulted in fewer cases in their facility,” stated Theresa Adkinson, Administrator.

For more information on Samaritan’s response to COVID-19 as well as resources related to symptoms, treatment, and communication please visit the Health Alert link on Samaritan Healthcare’s website. Additionally, for anyone with concerns that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, we encourage them to call our 24-hour nurse hotline at 509-764-3331.

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